

8 August 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Language Training Division

FROM:

[Redacted]

Director of Training and Education

STAT

SUBJECT: Language School Senior Instructor Orientation

Hugh,

1. I would like to thank all of your people who participated in the orientation program that was set up for me today. As I have gotten to know the Language Training Division personnel over the years, I have come to regard them with fondness and having the opportunity to see them at work in their natural habitat just adds to my respect for their professional abilities. I do not have the opportunity for such observation as often as I would like, and today's experience was not only very pleasant but was also useful to me.

2. These are indeed first-class professionals who have every right to be very proud of what they are doing. ✓

[Redacted]

STAT

DTE

Language School Senior Instructor Orientation

10:30 A.M. Wednesday, 8 August

<u>Room</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Observations</u>	<u>Escort</u>	
423	1030	French Test Testers		STAT STAT
344	1100	Arabic Class Teacher - Students:		STAT STAT
		3rd month		
336	1110	Russian Class Teacher - Student:		STAT STAT STAT
		4th week of special 7-week program to raise speaking level of Russian readers.	DDI-SOVA	
STAT 312	1120	French Class Teacher - Student:		STAT
		end of 1st month		
426	1130	Discuss test results		STAT
426	1145	Discuss class observations		STAT

You will be escorted to the test and classes, but you will be the only observer in the room. Attached for your information is the briefing sheet for testing candidates. When you enter the testing room, [] will supply you with the rating form used by the testers. STAT

BRIEFING FOR LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TEST CANDIDATES

1. Purpose. The purpose of a language proficiency test is to determine the level of your language skill compared with all other speakers of the language regardless of how or where this knowledge was acquired. This is not a pass-or-fail test. Your proficiency is rated on a scale of zero through five and becomes a matter of official record for the Agency's inventory of language skills in accordance with directives of the Agency's Language Development Committee, a managerial tool upon which personnel actions, for example, may be based.

2. Who is Tested? Employees who have claimed language proficiency must be tested, as well as those whose previous tests are over three years old. In addition, anyone who has acquired a new language or improved his knowledge of a language through study, residence abroad, or other means, should make that proficiency a matter of official record. New employees, overseas returnees and nominees for language-required positions are also tested. As a placement tool, employees scheduled for further training in a language are also tested if their previous test is over six months old. You have been scheduled for a test because you fit into one of these categories. The examination tests for the skill(s) claimed. If you have claimed both reading and oral skills, you will be tested in both. If you have claimed reading only or speaking only you will be given the appropriate test.

3. Criteria. All candidates are assessed against the same criteria as specified by the Interagency Language Roundtable in its definitions for assigning language proficiency ratings. The tests are not geared to any specific course of instruction or professional specialty, but are devised to test an individual's general language proficiency in relation to that of an educated native-born speaker, reader, or listener of the language.

4. Certification. Within two weeks after your test you will receive, through your Training Officer, a Certification of Language Proficiency which will show your tested ratings in reading, speaking and understanding, as appropriate. Definitions of the proficiency levels are attached.

5. The Oral Test. (a) In the oral portion of the test you will be examined for your proficiency in speaking and oral comprehension. In some languages, oral comprehension is tested through listening to tape-recorded conversations and passages. The speaking skill includes such factors as communication, pronunciations, vocabulary, fluency and structure. In order to facilitate the flow of speech the test is conducted as an informal conversation, in which the testers lead you into the use of the language at various levels. You should respond to their questions fully, so that the examiners will have a good sample of your

language skill upon which to grade you. They must make their decision according to what you actually say in the test. During the conversation the examiners may move to more advanced material than you feel you are able to handle. This is not to embarrass you but to assure that you have been given an opportunity to reach your highest level. If the subject being discussed is one with which you are not familiar, do not hesitate to say so; the examiners are testing you for your ability to handle the language, not your general knowledge. You must remember, however, that at the upper levels of proficiency you will be expected to discuss increasingly sophisticated subject matter, using broader vocabulary and more complex structures. On the average, the oral test last 20-30 minutes. Oral tests are recorded on tapes which are kept for six months.

Who Gives the Tests? (b) Tests are usually given by native speakers who are instructors or examiners employed by the Language School. In certain languages, Agency employees having native or near-native proficiency supplement the Language School Speakers or substitute for them. A linguist may also be present at the test to provide linguistic backup or give support in testing or grading, as necessary.

Tips. (c) Since this may be the first time you have taken this type of test, attached are some test-taking tips that will help you demonstrate your competence in the foreign language to the fullest.

TIPS ON HOW TO TAKE AN ORAL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TEST

1. RELAX.
Light a cigarette, rub your hands, blow your nose, talk about the weather--anything that will give you a few seconds to gain composure and confidence.
2. CHOOSE YOUR OWN SPEAKING SPEED.
Choose a speaking speed comfortable for you. Maintain that pace. If you know you may make more mistakes when you speak too fast, slow down. If you are a slow speaker by nature, say so to the tester, but still make the effort not to be dangerously slow.
3. KEEP TALKING.
Don't stop the conversation by saying simply "yes" or "no." Be generous. Give details. Explain your point. Develop your thoughts. Make comparisons. Use any device that shows the testers that you can carry a topic through. This will help your performance. Silence is your enemy. If you are not a talkative person by nature, you must make an extra effort for the test.
4. DON'T GET HUNG UP ON A WORD.
Avoid words you are uncertain of. All too often a candidate will rack his brains for a particular word he feels he must use, thus paralyzing the sentence. If you do get hung up, find a simple substitute and go on with the conversation.
5. DON'T AVOID GRAMMAR POINTS.
If a tester asks you what you would do if you had a million dollars, he/she is probably trying to make you use a specific grammar point. If you can handle it, comply. This may help raise your level.
6. DON'T TRY TO IMPRESS WITH YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF A PARTICULAR SUBJECT.
The testers do not care what you know but how you say it.
7. DON'T DOWNGRADE YOURSELF.
Don't apologize for your lack of ability in the language. Be positive. Let the testers be the judge.
8. DON'T TAKE OFFENSE AT QUESTIONS.
The tester might ask you anything, but they are not really interested in the content of your answers. Their questions are only devices to get you to produce a lot of speech in a variety of vocabulary areas.

WHAT TO DO IF . . .

1. IF YOU THINK YOU UNDERSTOOD WHAT THE TESTER ASKED, BUT ARE NOT SURE.
Act on what you think you understood. Chances are, you have.
Don't request unnecessarily that the questions be repeated.
2. IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE.
Correct yourself. If you know you made a mistake, correct it and go on. You do that even in your own language. Correcting a mistake in no way detracts from your performance.
3. IF YOU ARE HOPELESSLY LOST IN A LONG SENTENCE.
Stop. Collect yourself. Say something like, "Let me tell you again--it is a bit complicated." Then get back at it. Break it into shorter sentences and carry it through. Don't fret over what happened. No one expects you to speak without mistakes. Fretting over a mistake only reduces your efficiency, jeopardizing the rest of the test.
4. IF YOU DRAW A BLANK.
If you draw a momentary blank, give an appropriate answer. For instance, if a tester asks you how long you have been living in the area and you can't remember how to say "one and a half" say "one year."
5. IF YOU SUDDENLY BECOME NERVOUS DURING THE TEST.
The testers will sense it and help you. But you are entitled to stop for a few seconds and regain control. Relax. Admit that you are nervous and joke about it. Often this alone is enough to make you comfortable again.
6. IF SOMETHING IS INTERFERING WITH YOUR ABILITY TO PERFORM.
If the air conditioner bothers you, say so. If you can't hear the tester, say so. If the tester is speaking too fast for you, say so. Remember: This is your test. You are entitled to the best testing conditions.
7. IF A QUESTION IS PUT TO YOU AND YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE SUBJECT.
Admit it. But go on to explain why you don't know. For instance, say you haven't had the time to read the newspaper because you've been busy doing something else, and explain what it is. (While you explain you are using the language.) Or, slide to another subject. For instance, "I know rather little about the Middle East because I am more interested in European affairs or the Far East," and go on from there.

8. IF YOU FEEL, "OH BOY! THIS IS REALLY EASY."

If you feel the test is too easy, you are probably not demonstrating your highest level of proficiency. This is the moment to pull out some idioms you know well. Make an extra effort to talk on a higher level.

9. IF YOU FEEL, "OH! THIS IS GETTING ROUGH."

If you feel the test is getting difficult, it is normal. The testers are bringing you to the level where you begin to feel the pressure. The testers cannot determine your highest level unless they go beyond it.

B		SPEAKING PERFORMANCE PROFILE		TEST NUMBER	DATE
Pronunciation	Fluency/Integrative	Sociolinguistic/Culture	G =	Vocabulary	Tasks
P =	FI =	SC =		V =	T =
FULLY ACCEPTED BY ENS.	FULLY ACCEPTABLE TO ENS ON ALL SUBJECTS.	USE OF REGISTER, CULTURAL REFERENCES, AND COLLOQUIALISMS EQUIVALENT TO AN ENS.	EQUIVALENT TO ENS.	EQUAL TO ENS IN BREADTH AND IDIOM ON ALL SUBJECTS.	ALL FACTORS INTEGRATED INTO PERFORMANCE EQUIVALENT TO THAT OF AN ENS.
5	5	5	5	5	5
RARELY MISPRONOUNCES.	HIGH DEGREE OF FLUENCY, EFFORTLESS, SMOOTH, NORMALLY WITHIN RANGE ACCEPTABLE TO NS.	RESPONDS APPROPRIATELY ON ALL LEVELS NORMALLY PERTINENT TO PROFESSIONAL NEEDS. TL CULTURE DOMINATES.	ONLY OCCASIONAL ERRORS. NO PATTERN OF DEFICIENCY. MAKES USE OF HIGH-LEVEL DISCOURSE STRUCTURES.	EXTENSIVE, PRECISE, AND APPROPRIATE TO EVERY OCCASION.	ABLE TO TAILOR LANGUAGE TO FIT AUDIENCE. COUNSEL, PERSUADE, REPRESENT A POINT OF VIEW, NEGOTIATE, AND INTERPRET FOR DIGNITARIES.
4	4	4	4	4	4
ACCENT MAY BE FOREIGN. NEVER INTERFERES. RARELY DISTURBS ENS.	SPEAKS WITH FACILITY. RARELY HAS TO GROPE FLUENCY WITHIN OR CLOSE TO RANGE OF NS ACCEPTABILITY. HAS MORE PRONOUNCED ABILITY TO USE PARAPHRASE AND CIRCUMLOCUTION AND FEWER FILLERS. ALTHOUGH INTERLANGUAGE MAY SURFACE IN IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS, CANDIDATE ACTUALLY THINKING IN TL.	MAKES FREQUENT APPROPRIATE USE OF TL CULTURAL REFERENCES AND EXPRESSIONS. SOCIOLINGUISTIC INACCURACIES MAY EXIST, BUT DO NOT RESULT IN MISUNDERSTANDING.	ONLY SPORADIC ERRORS IN BASIC STRUCTURES, OCCASIONAL ERRORS IN LOW FREQUENCY STRUCTURES, AND MORE FREQUENT ERRORS IN LESS COMMON, COMPLETE STRUCTURES.	BROAD ENOUGH TO CONVERSE AND EXPRESS OPINIONS IN FORMAL AND INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS ABOUT PRACTICAL, SOCIAL, PROFESSIONAL, AND ABSTRACT TOPICS.	CAN CONVERSE IN FORMAL AND INFORMAL SITUATIONS, RESOLVE PROBLEM SITUATIONS, DEAL WITH UNFAMILIAR TOPICS, PROVIDE EXPLANATIONS, DESCRIBE IN DETAIL, OFFER SUPPORTED OPINIONS, AND HYPOTHEZIZE.
3	3	3	3	3	3
OFTEN FAULTY, BUT INTELLIGIBLE.	SPEAKS WITH CONFIDENCE, BUT NOT WITH FACILITY. HESITANTLY USES PARAPHRASE AND FILLERS. INTERLANGUAGE IS APPARENT, BUT RECEDING.	NL CULTURE MAY PREDOMINATE, BUT SOCIOLINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL CONTRASTS DO NOT OFFEND NS.	JOINS SENTENCES TOGETHER IN LIMITED DISCOURSE	SUFFICIENT TO SPEAK SIMPLY WITH SOME CIRCUMLOCUTIONS IN CASUAL CONVERSATIONS ABOUT CONCRETE TOPICS SUCH AS OWN BACKGROUND, FAMILY, AND INTERESTS, WORK, TRAVEL, AND CURRENT EVENTS.	ABLE TO FULLY PARTICIPATE IN CASUAL CONVERSATIONS. CAN EXPRESS FACTS, GIVE INSTRUCTIONS, DESCRIBE, REPORT ON, AND PROVIDE NARRATION ABOUT CURRENT, PAST, AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES.
2	2	2	2	2	2
ERRORS FREQUENT. INTELLIGIBLE TO NS USED TO DEALING WITH FOREIGNERS.	SLOW, STRAINED, EXCEPT FOR ROUTINE EXPRESSIONS. AVOIDS CERTAIN CONSTRUCTIONS AND VOCABULARY. INTERLANGUAGE MAY DOMINATE.	SUFFICIENT CULTURAL, SOCIOLINGUISTIC KNOWLEDGE TO DEAL WITH NS USED TO DEALING WITH FOREIGNERS.	ERRORS FREQUENT, BUT INTELLIGIBLE TO NS USED TO DEALING WITH FOREIGNERS.	INCLUDES BOTH CONTENT AND FUNCTION WORDS BUT LIMITED TO EVERYDAY SURVIVAL AND COURTESY REQUIREMENTS.	CAN CREATE WITH THE LANGUAGE. ASK AND ANSWER QUESTIONS, PARTICIPATE IN SHORT CONVERSATIONS.
1	1	1	1	1	1
UNINTELLIGIBLE.	SO HALTING THAT CONVERSATION IS IMPOSSIBLE.	NO EVIDENCE OF SOCIOLINGUISTIC OR CULTURAL AWARENESS.	TOTALLY WRONG OR NONEXISTENT.	INADEQUATE FOR EVEN SIMPLE CONVERSATION.	NO FUNCTIONAL ABILITY.
0	0	0	0	0	0

ENS = educated native speaker

NS = native speaker

TL = target language

NL = native language

A	LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY RATINGS		TEST NUMBER	DATE
	EXAMINEE	EXAMINER	LANGUAGE	

SPEAKING

UNDERSTANDING

SCORES (from this page)

	RANGE	
5	5	5
	4+	
	4	
4	3+	4
	3	
3	2+	3
	2	
2	1+	2
	1	
1	0+	1
	0	
0		0

SPEAKING

1.	
2.	
3.	
TOTAL	

S-RATING

--

UNDERSTANDING

1.	
2.	
3.	
TOTAL	

U-RATING

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SCORES (from other side)

	PRONUNCIATION	FLUENCY/ INTEGRATIVE	SOCIOLINGUISTIC/ CULTURE	GRAMMAR	VOCABULARY	TASKS
1.						
2.						
3.						
TOTAL						

REMARKS: